"Never before have we provided as complete a picture to evaluate student performance. By examining achievement and growth over time we have a more robust profile of school effectiveness than once-a-year MCAS scores alone provide."
*Commissioner Mitchell Chester, DESE press release, October 27, 2009*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**
Wednesday, December 9, 2009

**CONTACT: Lori Likis Director Of School Improvement**
Benjamin Banneker Charter School
617-497-7771 ext 231 or llikis@banneker.org

# *State's New Growth Model Reveals Success at Banneker School*

## *Students Outperform Peers In Math & English*

**Cambridge, MA --** In October, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) released a new model for measuring student achievement on the Massachusetts state test, MCAS. In addition to measuring achievement as it traditionally has, by student performance in one year, DESE now measures growth in student performance over time. The model measures how much students have grown from one year to the next in comparison to their academic peers, calculating a "student growth percentile" (SGP). The model also measures growth for student groups, schools, and districts.

The growth model has cast a new light on the achievement of many Massachusetts public schools, including the Benjamin Banneker Charter Public School. Under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB), Banneker struggled to achieve math improvement targets. In 2009, Banneker succeeded in making Adequate Yearly Progress by meeting all of its improvement targets for all students in both math and English language arts. However, it is with the new growth model where Banneker will realize greater academic success, particularly in math.

Committed to ensuring students are provided a high quality curriculum to meet the state's challenging academic achievement standards, Banneker Executive Director Marlon Davis hailed the growth model as a valuable window into the complexities of student achievement. "This growth model is an essential academic tool to measure the academic progress and growth of our students," said Executive Director Davis. "Tracking student performance can work to ensure no child is left behind," added Board Chairperson Harriet Tolpin.

For Banneker, the growth model revealed favorable results in both English and math. But it is in math, Banneker's improvement area, that the growth model revealed Banneker's most impressive results. Compared to their academic peers across the state, Banneker students achieved "high growth" in math, with a student growth percentile of 64.0. This growth outpaced that of the state, which achieved "typical growth" in math with a percentile of 50.0. Most notably, Banneker's growth rate greatly outpaced that of the state for low income and African American students, some of the state's most historically underserved student groups. Banneker's low income and African American students achieved growth percentiles almost 20 percentage points higher than that of their peers statewide. Banneker's growth percentile for low-income students was 64.0 compared to the state's 44.0, and Banneker's growth percentile for African American students was 61.0 compared to the state's 46.0.

In English language arts, Banneker students achieved the high end of "typical growth" compared to their academic peers across the state. With a student growth percentile of 57.0, Banneker students demonstrated greater growth than 57% of students statewide with the same academic history. This growth outpaced that of the state in English language arts, which achieved a growth percentile of 50.0 for all students.

Lastly, Banneker students fared very well in a growth model comparison of Massachusetts charter schools. By sixth grade, Banneker students achieved "high growth" in both English language arts and math, with percentiles of 76.0 and 79.0. When compared with sixth grade peers from Banneker's sending districts, including Cambridge and Boston, Banneker sixth grade students outperformed their peers by a remarkable 23 percentage points in English language arts and 34 percentage points in math.

###